

And I, liking his face, made friends with him, and spake to him of the love of God ; so that he, being greatly moved and softened, told me his history, and of you waiting here in loneliness for him, while he was ashamed to face you after all his bad behaviour."

"Poor lad, poor lad," murmured the mother.

"But be sure that he will come, dame," Martin went on ; "I will vouch for his sincerity with my life, and—— Blessed be God, here he is!"

It was indeed the returning prodigal, a fine, sturdily built man, swinging up the pebbled path between the flower-beds. On the doorsill they met, mother and son, and her happiness was complete. The first transports over, they sought Martin, to thank him, and found him with face shining with joy for that he had in any way been instrumental in bringing this pleasant meeting to pass. Naturally they pressed him to stay with them for a few days, that they might show him how grateful they were ; but when Martin explained his position, told them to what he was returning, and his longings to see his dear one, they pressed him no longer.

At early dawn next morning they bade him God-speed, loading him with blessings. He rode on his way with a full heart, and a feeling that this auspicious happening augured well for his happiness. So much does the taint of superstition often cling to the best of men. Full of eager hope he pressed on as rapidly as his good horse found possible, and at four in the afternoon was riding down the steep High Street into Lyme. Just pleasantly